LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1. (Withdrawn) An electronic inventory management tool comprising:

a memory storing an electronic determination of a desired quantity of at least two types of materials;

materials ordering logic configured to supply an electronic message to a supplier of one of said types of material specifying quantity and time frame requirements therefor as a function of said desired quantity, and further configured to process a confirmation message from said supplier; and

feedback logic coupled to said memory and programmed to provide information with respect to consumption of said one of said types of materials to ensure said desired quantity of said one of said types of material is available.

2. (Withdrawn) The tool of claim 1 wherein said electronic determination includes forecast, bill of materials, an inventory level and material lead time parameters.

3. (Withdrawn) The tool of claim 1 wherein said materials ordering logic is further configured to periodically supply a confirmation request message to said supplier requesting an updated confirmation of said confirmation message.

4. (Withdrawn) The tool of claim 1 wherein said feedback logic compares an actual run rate to a corresponding anticipated run rate and an actual production yield to an anticipated production yield.

5. (Withdrawn) The tool of claim 2 further comprising a feedback mechanism that compares said forecast with actual sales to ensure said desired level of said material is adjusted.

6. (Withdrawn) The tool of claim 1 further comprising a listing of alternate suppliers for ensuring said desired quantity of said material is available.

7. (Withdrawn) The tool of claim 6 further comprising a second electronic message sent to said alternate supplier of one of said type of material.

8. (Previously Presented) A method of inventory control, said method comprising the steps of:

determining, electronically, a required quantity of a material;

communicating said quantity and a time frame to a supplier of said material;

receiving a confirmation message from said supplier; and

using feedback relating to a performance of at least one supply chain participant to maintain a desired quantity of said material on hand, wherein said feedback is utilized in re-determining said required quantity of a material.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8 further comprising the step of:

supplementing said communication of said quantity and time frame to said supplier as a function of said feedback.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein said step of determining includes processing one of a product forecast, a bill of materials, a material lead time and a desired inventory level.

11. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein said step of communicating is performed via an Internet.

12. (Original) The method of claim 8 further comprising a step of transmitting a reminder message to said supplier requesting confirmation of an order corresponding to said confirmation message received from said supplier.

13. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein said step of receiving is performed via an Internet.

14. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein said step of using feedback compares an actual run rate to a corresponding anticipated run rate and an actual production yield to an anticipated production yield.

15. (Withdrawn) A method of production comprising:

generating a bill of materials for a product;

determining a desired inventory level for said product;

estimating a demand for said product;

determining a material lead time;

combining said bill of materials, said desired inventory level, said material lead time

and said demand for said product to determine required timing and quantities of materials;

placing orders via a communications network that includes an Internet for said required quantities of materials with suppliers of said materials; and

using software components to adjust said required quantities of materials based on variations in said forecast and said desired inventory levels.

16. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 15 wherein said step of placing orders is performed via electronic mail.

17. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 15 further comprising:

receiving messages from said suppliers wherein said messages are in response to said orders.

18. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 17 wherein said messages are confirmations of said orders.

19. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 15 wherein said messages are denials of said orders.

20. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 17 further comprising:

contacting alternate suppliers via electronic mail wherein said contacting includes placing orders for materials.

21. (Previously Presented) An inventory control system, said system comprising:

a processor operable to determine a required quantity of material;

a means for communicating with at least one supplier of said material, wherein said communication includes conveying to said at least one supplier said quantity and a time frame and receiving from said at least one supplier a confirmation;

computer readable code processed by said processor, wherein said code is operable to re-determine said required quantity using feedback relating to a performance of at least one supply chain participant.

22. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 21 wherein said feedback includes results of a comparison between an actual run rate and a corresponding anticipated run rate.

23. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 21 wherein said feedback includes results of a comparison between an actual production yield and a corresponding anticipated production yield.

24. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 21 further comprising:

computer readable code processed by said processor and operable to determine said quantity using one or more of a product forecast, a bill of materials, a material lead time, and a desired inventory level.

25. (Previously Presented) Computer executable code stored on a computer readable medium, said code comprising:

code operable to determine a desired quantity of material and a timetable for receiving said material;

code operable to interact with at least one supplier via electronic messages over the Internet, wherein said interaction is capable of acting as an order for said material and a confirmation of said order; and

code operable to send, via electronic messages over the Internet, a request for at least one additional confirmation of said order.

26. (Previously Presented) The code of claim 25 further comprising:

code operable to identify at least one alternate supplier of said material if said at least one supplier fails to confirm said order.

27. (Previously Presented) The code of claim 25 further comprising:

code operable to identify a supplier of alternate material if said at least one supplier fails to confirm said order.

28. (Previously Presented) The code of claim 25 further comprising:

code operable to receive electronic messages over the Internet, denial of said order from said at least one suppler; and

code operable to identify at least one alternate supplier of said material;

code operable to interact with said at least one alternate supplier, via electronic messages over the Internet, wherein said interaction is capable of acting as an order for said material and a confirmation of said order; and

code operable to re-evaluate said desired quantity of material and said timetable for receiving said material;

code operable to send, via electronic messages over the Internet, at least one request for additional confirmation.

29. (Previously Presented) The code of claim 25 further comprising:

code operable to re-evaluate said desired quantity of material and said timetable for receiving said material;

code operable to modify said desired quantity or said timetable; and

code operable to adjust said order via the Internet, wherein said adjusted order reflects said modified quantity or said modified timetable; and

code for adjusting said desired quantity based upon an analysis of forecasts for one or more of, bills of materials, desired inventory levels, material lead times, actual run rates, or actual yields.